

VZCZCXRO7332  
PP RUEHROV  
DE RUEHJM #1977 3071301  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 031301Z NOV 09  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6523  
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001977

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/03/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON EAST JERUSALEM HOME DEMOLITIONS

REF: A. JERUSALEM 1956

[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 1838

[1](#)C. JERUSALEM 1344

[1](#)D. JERUSALEM 1217

[1](#)E. JERUSALEM 965

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Greg Marchese,  
per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. The Jerusalem Municipality on November 2 executed three home demolitions in East Jerusalem, displacing 37 Palestinians, including 18 children, according to residents and NGO sources. Local residents told PolOff that the owners of the first two homes were not aware of any demolition orders. UN OCHA said that the Municipality has demolished 47 homes so far this year in East Jerusalem. End Summary.

TWO HOME DEMOLITIONS IN ABU TOR,  
ONE MORE ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES  
-----

[1](#)2. (C) The Jerusalem Municipality on November 2 executed three home demolitions in East Jerusalem, displacing 37 Palestinians, including 18 children. The first two demolitions -- next door to one another -- occurred at 8:00 a.m. local time in Abu Tor, at the southern edge of the "Holy Basin." (Note: the term "Holy Basin" is used to designate the area ringed by the Temple Mount, the Mount of Olives, and Mount Zion, which contains a number of holy sites and rich archeological remains. End Note.) PolOff interviewed local residents two hours after the demolition occurred, including local leader Fakhri Abu Diab, who said that 13 members from the al-Shwaikeh family were displaced, including 11 children, and seven members of the al-Qawasmi family were displaced, including five children.

[1](#)3. (C) Abu Diab explained to PolOff that neither family was aware that the Municipality had issued demolition orders for their homes, which he said were built over 20 years ago. "They did not know anything about this until this morning," he said. Jerusalem City Council Member Meir Margalit told PolOff that procedures require municipal officials to post demolition orders outside the property, "but scotch tape doesn't stick to concrete walls for very long, and in two hours the demolition notice is blown away by the wind." According to observers, the families affected were not able to remove all of their belongings from their homes before the demolition commenced. The home owners, whom PolOff saw dismantling the building debris, were instructed by the Municipality to clean up the site within seven days or face city-issued fines.

[1](#)4. (SBU) The Municipality later in the day demolished a home in Beit Hanina, displacing 17 members of the Rajabi family. During the demolition, the father of the household and one of his sons were arrested and two others were injured, according to UN OCHA.

15. (C) In a separate November 2 meeting, UN OCHA Humanitarian Affairs officer Elin Asgeirsdottir, who coordinates displacement response for East Jerusalem, said that the Municipality has demolished 56 structures (47 of which were residences) this year in East Jerusalem, including the three homes demolished on November 2. She said that Israeli authorities are generally uncooperative in discussing Jerusalem issues with the UN, and noted that OCHA has no contact with any Municipality officials. She added that other foreign missions in Jerusalem have told her that they are withholding strong condemnation of home demolitions, "because they think the U.S. is already addressing the issue with the Israelis."

RUBINSTEIN